THE GIRLS OF THE FAR EAST

S. G. W. Benjamin Tells How They Are Brought Up and Married in the Levant.

A Country Where Young Ladies Are Never Permitted to Fall in Love—A Paradise for Mothers-in-Law—Elopement in Turkey.

Written for the Sunday Journal.

If one were asked to mention the greatest point of difference between America and the East, including the lands of the eastern Mediterranean called the Levant, he would not be far wrong in considering it to be the condition of woman. We hear so many complaints here of the bondage and inferior advantages of women as compared with the glorious liberty enjoyed by the men of America, chiefly because, forsooth, the former happen not to enjoy the questionable duty of the ballot, that we are sometimes liable to forget that it is only in the United States and to a lesser degree Great Britain that practical equality of liberty, rights and privileges exists between the sexes. As we pass through Europe eastward we find this equality decreasing, until we reach a state of society where woman undoubtedly occupies a position far inferior to that of man.

Notwithstanding this fact, it really seems as if woman received more attention before the laws and held a more prominent position in society there than with us. Certainly the average Oriental gives more thought and attention to the subject of woman than the men of any other nation except your genuine citizen of Paris, a city that is by itself a nation, of which France is an outlying province. Thus we find that whatever the country or the condition of civilization, woman everywhere holds the first position in society and is its most important factor. Thus we find the truth of the saying once more proved: "Toujours les femmes!"

As marriage is everywhere the profession to which most women are destined in America and all wommen in the East, it is in marriage that we see their relative position most distinctly demonstrated in those two widely separated regions. Here a woman has the sole election in her own hands. She marries from choice the one she prefers, and love is the moving cause. Of course, marriages may and often do occur with us for altogether more mercenary reasons, but happily they are the exception. Whatever end Providence may have in the institution of marriage, we consider that love is the only legitimate reason to be considered by those who enter this solemn and tremendous relation.

But from Greece to China it may be confidently stated that love is the last thing considered by those who propose to marry. Unquestionably such marriages of love do occur among the Christian Greeks and Amenians, but they are rare. Love may follow marriage, but money, position and the like are, as a rule and a custom, the moving causes. The woman has little option in the matter, the business being transacted by the near relations with the aid of intermediaries. Compulsion is often used, and in Mohammedan countries the parties most interested have, most probably, never seen each other. How much love can there be in such a union? It is evident that while the woman may be saved some embarrassment or disappointment by this system, on the other hand she places herself and her happiness far more beyond her power of retrieval than her American sister. It is perhaps a consciousness of her helplessness that once married a woman in the East more often identifies herself with her husband and merges her interests in his than an American woman. This may account for the fact that three or four Turkish or Persian women often get along better sharing one husband between them than an American who has a husband all to herself. Whatever jealousies or bickering they may have they all unite in a common sense of proprietorship in him, and work harmoniously to promote his interests. It is not possible, also—I say this with caution, lest the suggestion excite derision—is it not possible, I say, that marriages between parties who have no acquaintance previous to matrimony, may prove more endurable when the wife sees her much-married husband only part of the time? It would only be human nature if such should be the case.

Persian and Turkish women also find much compensation for their peculiar marriges in their children. The relation of parent and child is much more intimate in those countries than with us. The mother knows that as long as her son lives she will be cared for tenderly and reverently, however she may be treated by her husband. Her daughters also live in the anderoon with her until they are married; they never go out to school; their chief companion is their mother. To obtain husbands for her daughters the mother must begin betimes to provide them with a dowry. Without that it is hopeless to think of marrying them off. Be it ever so little, they must have something, be it lands, or clothes, or jewelry, or cattle, or household furniture. As soon as a little Persian girl begins to talk her marriage and her dowery become the chief topics of her thought, and of her talk with her mother. And yet when the selected and favored one looked to from infancy comes along, and she is carried closely veiled to his house, a bride, perhaps they look upon each other for the first time. It is clear there can be no love in such a union, which is a pure contract of convenience. That love sometimes follows, if the parties are satisfied with each other, is no excuse for such marriages, and yet that is the way four-fifths of the world's population are married.

The women of Persia appear to be quite as happy as our women. One can imagine that a Persian lady may be happier in the simplicity of her home costume, so free from the changing round of fashions than the American women, whose chief end of life appears to be to oscillate from one milliner's shop to the other. The Persian woman and most Oriental women are far more concerned in concealing their faces when abroad than their persons. This is one of the marked contrasts between Asiatic and European women. The face must be hidden at all events; the limbs, if possible, but they must not be protected from observation at the expense of the face. The Wends of Prussia, who are an Asiatic tribe, retain the Asiatic indifference in regard to exhibiting the nether limbs. The peasant women of Turkey or Persia work in the fields with their husbands. For convenience they tuck up their skirts and drop the mantle that conceals the face. But if a stranger comes along they take alarm at once, and hastily draw up the mantle over the face, but the limbs are left to take care of themselves. This trait is characteristic of all classes, and indicates a subtle difference between the women of the East and West, regarding the delicate question of modesty. To all of which we may say, honi soit qui mal y pense.

We hear a great deal about the severity practiced by the lords of Asiatic creation towards their weaker halves. It is doubtless too true that men of high degree, possessed of power and of many wives as well, have too often in the past exhibited terrible tyranny and exercised sudden and horrible vengeance. The lash, the bowstring and the yataghan have too often played a deadly part in the mysterious tragedies of Oriental households, and such deeds may yet be wrought sometimes in the East. But among the middle and lower classes husbands have not had the domestic agents at hand to execute their bloody mandates, or have preferred to avail themselves of the facilities for divorce, which the law places in the hands of any husband who, with a certain prescribed formula, says to a woman thrice before witnesses: "Thou art divorced." She suffers little or no obloquy by such a sudden release, but easily finds another husband, unless, indeed, the former husband repents of his haste and asks her to remarry him. This often occurs. But if a husband of hasty temper, or one married to a wife of wayward passions divorces her three times, the third divorce is irrevocable, unless the woman becomes the wife in every sense of the term, of another man, who takes her with the avowed purpose of releasing her after the consummation of this second marriage in order that she may return to her first husband. Cases have not unfrequently occurred in which husbands fond of their wives, but of hasty and jealous temper, have been very seriously and irretrievably entrapped. The wife, having seen a man she likes better, arranges with him by a go-between to force her husband to divorce her three times. She is then to marry her lover on the pretense that she is then to be divorced by him in order to return to her first husband. He will then decline to divorce her, and, as they are in love with each other, the first husband has no remedy but to submit to the permanent loss of his wife.

Men of rank in Persia also prefer at present to adopt the milder advantages of divorce than the assassin's dagger. One of the ministers of the Nasr-ed-Deen, Shah's Babinet, found that his six wives had proved untrue to him. In a past generation they could have been executed on the spot. Instead of that, he divorced them all, together with the eunuch who had not been wide awake enough to his duties, or perhaps, had not been sufficiently backsheeshed; but if a Mohammedan husband chooses to have the fullest extent of the law when his wife is caught in adultery, he can still have her put to death by legal process, and she has no remedy. When I was at Teheran, a mollh or priest, insisted that his recreant wife and her lover should die, and they were condemned to be stoned to death. This extreme penalty is rarely enforced, however, in these days.

But a horrible custom still exists among the Druses which, in the course of ages, must have wrought terrible injustice to many poor, innocent women. It is the possibility that organized injustice like that can exist and be permitted to continue in a community which makes cynics, pessimists and agnostics. When a Druse woman marries her absolute chastity is guaranteed by her family. Marry she must, whether she wills it or no. But the supposed evidences of chastity are carefully scrutinized by the husband. If he thinks he has reasons to doubt that she came to him a virgin, then he brings the matter to the attention of her family. A family council is summoned at once, and husband and wife appear before them. It matters not that the trembling bride swears that the lack of evidence of virginity was a physical infirmity beyond her control, a circumstance which often happens. On both sides the judges are stern and uncompromising, although they be of her own kin, who should protect her. If the woman succeeds in proving her husband's charges to be false she returns to her family and he returns the dowry, and is indignantly thrust out from their number. But if the dreadful charges are found or thought to be true, which is too often the case, then the oldest brother, or the next of kin, if he be dead, has an imperative duty to perform. With the approval of all present, he draws his glittering knife and cuts the throat of the bride in the presence of her own parents and husband. Screams and prayers are of no avail; the custom of the Druses is unchangeable.

The Armenian women of Persia and of Turkey in Asia do not appear to have a whit better time of it in matrimony than their Mohammedan sisters in those countries. They have their husbands entirely to themselves, but they stand in his presence and he eats alone. She must constantly keep the lower half of her face muffled, must always rise before her mother-in-law, and for the space of a whole year, or until the first child is born, must not speak before the mother-in-law, except in answer to an inquiry. What a paradise for mothers-in-law!

The Armenian women belong to a bright race, however, and they show their spirit whenever the opportunity comes. They have a piquant and more refined style of beauty than many Oriental types, and adapt themselves very readily to improved conditions, which can hardly be said of the Turkish women. The writer well remembers dining with a Turkish lady who was entirely unveiled in company with her husband and several others. This very extraordinary opportunity was only possible from the fact that he had just embraced Christianity. Whether he continued in that religion, so uncongenial to the Turk, I know not, but I shall not soon forget that remarkable spectacle of a Turkish lady dining in a company of both sexes at a Christian table. I must admit that there was an apparent incongruity in her appearance there under such circumstances.

The quick adaptability of the Armenian woman to new conditions was admirably exhibited when Mr. Finlay, the Philhellenist, fell in love with a fair Armenian at Constantinople, and arranged an elopement with her. She was to descend from her window by a rope ladder; he would be in waiting with horses; they would fly to the seashore, go on board his yacht, and seek foreign shores.

But when the hour came the lady hesitated, as well she might. To leave her home forever with a strange Englishman, and have to go down a rope ladder besides, was too much for her nerves. In vain pleaded her sister, who was in the plot, and the precious moments were flying fast.

"Well," exclaimed the sister, "if you will not go I will; he shall not be disappointed." Thereupon she scrambled down the ladder, sprang on the horse, the lover mounting his steed, and they fled to the boat. It was not until the following morning that the poor man found that he had brought away the wrong lady. Unlike some men in such circumstances, he married her on reaching Athens, and they lived together a number of years, until her death. She left a daughter, who died when blooming into maidenhood.

The Greek women have all the quickness of their race, the features mobile and the eyes superb. But they lose the gracefulness of form early. There are many types of the Greek beauty, from the mixed race of Albania to the semi-Latin women of Tenos or Scio, or the semi-Asiatic Greek of Asia Minor. They have all the heroism of their ancestors, and more courage, as I am sometimes inclined to think, than the men. At the siege of Missolanghi the wife of Tzavellas, whom I saw in boyhood, accompanied her husband at the head of the sortie that cut its way through the Turkish lines. She was of short stature, but on one arm she carried her child and with her right hand brandished a naked scimetar. Unfortunately for the full development of the Greek woman's character, as some might think, she is still ruled by Oriental matrimonial methods, and hence is partially an Oriental. Marry she must. Supposing a family of three sisters and seven brothers; not one of the brothers marries until the sisters are all provided with husbands. Hence in Greece the men generally marry late in life and the women wed men far older than themselves. A girl of sixteen or eighteen marrying a man of forty-five to sixty is the most common thing in the world among the Greeks. Marriage is also with them a question of money; there must be some property on both sides. Love is no consideration and plays no part in Greek marriages, notwithstanding that Eros was a Greek god. Although, of course, human, yet the sexual passion among Greeks is not so universally prepominant as with some races.

The marriage ceremony of the Greeks and Armenians is intolerably long. It always occurs in church; no pews nor seats of any sort are permitted; the densely-crowded aisles are filled with incense, and by the time the long-haired priests have chanted and prayed two or three hours every one is ready to fall with exhaustion. Was this elaborate marriage mummery devised to act as an obstacle to entering the holy state of matrimony? Before closing it may be added that our missionaries have repeatedly married natives of those Eastern countries, and those unions have, to all accounts, resulted happily.

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Overdoing It.

Washington Post.

Those able correspondents who are laboring so hard to make the present administration odious by comparison are in danger of overdoing the business. A correspondent of the Pittsburg Dispatch, in writing of life at the White House, named Mrs. Hayes as an ideal mistress of that historic mansion, and says "when delegations of ladies visited her by appointment, she took pleasure in showing them all over the house—General Grant's room, Garfield's bedroom, where he spent so many days and weary nights of pain, Nellie Grant's maiden meditation room, and others." The only thing to mar this pathetic recital is the fact that President Garfield did not occupy the White House until after President Hayes's term had expired, and Mrs. Hayes had ceased to be mistress of the mansion.

A Contrast.

Troy Times.

On the contrary, there is ample proof that the farmers' interests have been most carefully guarded, there having been an increase in the tariff on all of their products, ranging from 50 to 300 per cent. Contrast this with the cuts made right and left by the Mills bill, and then let the farmer ask how much he would gain by "sweeping out" the Republican party.

The Country Editor.

Philadelphia Inquirer.

The field of the country editor is just as important as it ever was, in spite of the growth of city journals, and no career offers better opportunities to ambitious and capable young men.

WONDERFUL LONDON BRIDGE.

A Whirlpool of Traffic—Interesting History of the World-Famous Structure.

London Letter in Boston Herald.

Dr. Johnson would have it that the full tide of human life flowed at Charing Cross. It the dear old Doctor's day this may have been true. In our day the tide of human life that sweeps through London is so strong that countless channels must be provided for it. The stupendous volume and the force of that mighty tide must now be diverted into a myriad courses, and hence it is impossible that the full strength shall manifest itself at any single place. But of all the wonderful channels of ebb and flow, London bridge is by far the most notable. Nay, the spectacle presented by London bridge for six days in the week is amazing. You may search the world through and you will find nothing like it. The crush, the rush, the roar, first bewilder the stranger, and then arouse his awe and admiration. Here, before all other places in that mystery—London—one has revealed to him the might, the majesty, of this chief city of the earth.

To my thinking, London bridge, from 8 o'clock to 10 in the morning and from 4 to 6 in the afternoon, is the most marvelous sight in this metropolis of wonders. I know not when the spectacle is the more astonishing, in the morning, when the tide of life floods cityward, or in the evening, when it ebbs to the south. But I think the picturesque effect is heightened in the winter dusks when the dark masses press swiftly into the gloom of Southwark, and the black river splashes between the granite arches, and bears strange, bulky, undistinguishable forms on its desperate current, when the red golden glow slowly fades in the west, and the domes and spires dissolve in the advancing night shades, and the lamps begin to flash along the shores and from the masts of vessels in the "Pool," each lantern signaling, until the whole vista sparkles with red, and green and yellow gleams.

On the deck of an Atlantic liner in mid-ocean at night, when the sea tosses and hisses, and the wind howls, and the ship plunges blindly against the contending elements, one is overmastered by the knowledge of his helplessness; he is an atom in infinite space, borne unresistingly by irresistible forces. One becomes morbidly conscious of his own insignificance, his abject powerlessness, as he is hurled thus into the black caverns of night. And a similar feeling seizes when you are caught in the darkness on London bridge, engulfed in the living tide that pours along this channel, emptying the sea of London into that wider sea beyond.

Many a time I have been swept across this granite viaduct by that mad, ungoverned tide. For more than a year I was daily caught in its northerly flood and its southerly ebb, and yet the wonder of it grew with every morning and evening passage; the imposing spectacle ever moving, ever changing, and yet ever the same in its swelling volume and its headlong rush. The scene is always new and always thrilling, view it as often as you may.

Of the eighteen Thames bridges in London, this is the first in importance, and the first from the river's mouth. The Thames runs on fifty or sixty miles before it reaches the sea, and all this course from the bridge to the Nore is covered with vessels. London itself extends on both sides of the river several miles "below bridge," hence the enormous amount of traffic that passes over these granite arches. Old London bridge, which a favorite nursery rhyme represented as forever "falling down," was providentially held together until the end of the first quarter of this century, when the present structure was built about four hundred feet to the west. The old rhyme did not greatly exaggerate the condition of the ancient bridge, which had been tumbling to pieces for a hundred years. Old London bridge was a perilous structure above and below. It contracted the river bed so that the current was exceedingly fierce, and "shooting the arches" was almost equivalent to suicide. It had been burned and bombarded and otherwise so badly treated in the long course of successive centuries, that repairs were constant and usually ineffective. Early in the eighteen hundreds the street on the bridge was "dark, narrow and dangerous; the houses overhung the road in such a terrific manner as almost to shut out the daylight, and arches of timber crossed the street to keep the shaky old tenements from falling on each other." Pennant tells us that "nothing but use could preserve the repose of the inmates, who soon grew deaf to the noise of the falling waters, the clamor of boatmen and the frequent shrieks of drowning wretches." In 1768 some local statistician computed that "fifty watermen, bargemen or seamen, valued at £20,000, were drowned annually in attempting to pass under the bridge."

During 1757-60 the last of the houses were removed from old London bridge. The most remarkable building that had ever been erected there belonged to the Elizabethan era, and was called "Nonsuch House." It had been made in Holland and sent over in parts. It extended across the bridge, and had an archway in the center. It was four stories high, with cupolas and turrets at each corner, and was put together with wooden pegs instead of nails. The American manufacturers who turn out entire buildings by the gross, and ship them in parts, may well repeat the old saying, "There's nothing new under the sun."

Before the ghastly practice was transferred to Temple Bar, London bridge had the dubious honor of displaying the heads of persons executed on the scaffold. The heads of Sir William Wallace, Bolingbroke, Jack Cade, the Bishop of Rochester and Sir Thomas More were among the dreadful collection. The present London bridge is the fifth of the name. The first was built of wood, in the year 994, in the reign of Ethelred II. It was destroyed by a storm which, in 1090, "blew down six hundred houses and lifted the roof off Bow Church." Its successor, also a wooden affair, was destroyed by fire in the second year of Stephen, 1136. A bridge of elm timber succeeded this, and in 1176 the first stone bridge was built. Timbs says that the bridge shops were furnished with all manner of trades. "As fine as London bridge" was formerly a proverb in the city, and many a serious, sensible tradesman used to believe that heap of enormities to be one of the seven wonders of the world, and, next to Solomon's temple, the finest thing that ever art produced. Pinmakers, the first of whom was a negro, kept shops in numbers here."

The famous old bridge had some distinguished residents in the course of its long history. There is a tradition that John Bunyan had lodgings in one of the bridge dwellings, but the report seems to be without foundation. But Holbein lived there, and so did Hogarth, when, as a young engraver, he sold his plates by weight. Peter Monamy, a marine artist of some fame in his day, lived there, and learned his art there.

The present bridge was completed in 1831, after seven and one-half years (less seventeen days) of labor. That stupendous structure, the Forth bridge, which was opened recently, was but seven years in building, and cost only half as much again as London bridge, and even its cost in human lives—100 as against forty—was not excessive, when we consider the extraordinary nature of the task.

The roadway of London bridge accommodates four lines of vehicles—two going in each direction, the heaviest and slowest traffic on the outside lines. Between each of the five arches there is a bay or resting place, where you may pause for a view of the river and of the tide of traffic that pours across the bridge itself. But the best appreciation of the volume and force of this traffic comes by throwing one's self into the current. Take an outside seat on an omnibus at the Bank of England when the evening tide of traffic ebbs southward. Your course lies through King William street, which empties its current into a wide space just above the bridge. Into this space three more great thoroughfares pour their living tides—Gracechurch street, Cannon street and Eastcheap, and a little lower down two lesser tributaries add to the moving mass. From every direction, and to every direction, streams of human beings and of vehicles come and go. There is a whirlpool of traffic. It rages there around King William's statue, and as far as you can see along the tributaries each stream is blocked. To be drawn heedlessly into the vortex would mean chaos, disaster, even death.

In the dusk the moving masses appear strange, all powerful, ungovernable. Yet they are governed. You cannot see the guiding power, but it is there in the shape of stalwart policemen, stationed in twos, and threes, and fours, at every point from which the streams flow into the receptacle, which, in turn, empties down the hill a swift, fierce flood, rumbling, roaring, pell-mell upon the bridge. In regulating the street traffic the word of the London constable is law; a motion of his hand is instantly obeyed. Without this governing power the passage of the bridge would be as destructive to life and property as battle or flood. As it is, the crush appears to you chaotic. It whirls and dashes in that open space, and the blocked stream—foot, and wheel, and hoof—back and swell upon the pavement, seeking outlet. The minutes pass in clamor and seeming confusion. You think it is hopeless for your coachman to attempt his way. But, at last, from some point unseen by you in the darkness, the word is given, the flood divides, as the waters divided of old, and in a trice your vehicle plunges in the downward current, spins down the slope, and rattles on the bridge.

Strong nerves and arms and quick eyes every driver must have to guide his freight, living or inanimate, along these dangerous rapids. Three or four streams of vehicles plunge side by side, their hubs almost touching. At the widest space there are half a dozen lines, solid, swiftly moving in the same direction. At the bridge the pace slackens, and, by some miracle, order reigns. Over the bridge the tide pours. The weight of it is enormous, the strength incalculable. The roadway is packed. There is scarcely an inch between a horses nose and the tailboard of the wagon in front of him or between the wheels that rumble side by side. The sidewalks, too, are crammed with a desperate rush of men and boys. Women you see here and there, or they are suggested by bonnets or bits of color in the compact black mass. If every man's life depended on the issue the rush could not be swifter. Yet no individual can mend his pace or slacken it. The current carries every atom with it. Suburban London is receiving its mighty accession of life.

Across the bridge trains are waiting and starting, tram-cars are pulled away with their weary loads, and 'busses are picking up the throngs. But it would seem that all the omnibuses in London were rolling upon the bridge from the city. Is it possible that elsewhere in London any trollies, and drays, and vans are left? Are there not tens of hundreds running in this tide? There is the wonder of it—the wonder of this ever-wonderful London. This mighty flood of life and life's impedimenta is but one of a thousand floods pouring outward from the metropolis to-night—every night.

Every fashion of English vehicle (and how many fashions there are!) you see here, rolling over London bridge. The furtive hansom, the despondent "growler," the private brougham, the lumbering 'bus, the farmer's wagon, the railway van, the costermonger's donkey-barrow — but the list is beyond one's power of enumeration. Of horses, every kind, lame and sound, fat and lean, from the snug cob and the tiny Shetland to the big elephant-like dray nag.

You look down from your seat upon the 'bus-top to the surface of the stream, which bears you along with its irresistible rush. The city has opened its flood-gates and the flood has leaped forth into the night. Every manner of man is here, and every product of man's art and craft. You see nothing distinctly, but only the turbulent mass sweeping on, on. You hear nothing but its roar and the lash of its waves upon the granite. In its embrace you are powerless, and every individual in it is as powerless as yourself. If you had fallen into the river you would see that flood and hear it as you see and hear this, in confusion and bewilderment, you would feel its pressure as you feel the pressure of this current, and it would carry you on as this does—helpless. You might strike out against it, but it would bear you down, and this will if you resist. You can only float upon it.

There is the river, rushing beneath the granite blocks which support the living flood. Lights gleam upon it here and there, revealing it cold, and black, and relentless, as other lights, fitfully straying, show this upper river of life to be. Down there, indistinctly in the darkness, crowds of shapeless craft are borne along—here a light, there a splash, then a crash, and always the hoarse cries of the waterman, piloting their cumbrous vessels through the floating maze. What London bridge is to the land traffic the "Pool" is to the water traffic. A wilderness of vessels floats there upon the dingy tide—vessels from every clime and every port, steamers and sailing craft, clippers and clumsy luggers, wherries and fishing boats, and the typical Thames barges. There they lie, rubbing sides, packed in the stream as the men and the wagons are packed upon the bridge. How they go up and down and resolve their various and respective courses, picking their way in the forest of hulls and masts, big and little, passeth the comprehension of a landsman. But how do the landsmen extricate themselves from the turbulent current that plunges over London bridge? Somehow the flood is distributed at the bridge's end. Another whirl is there, and there are countless cross currents and outlets. Somehow the atoms in the stream separate and find their ways—home! And in the morning the tide rushes back again, repeopling the deserted city. And the morning flood is as fierce and violent as the evening ebb. The stream rushes and roars back again over the granite viaduct. It is a race for life—for the work that gives men their right to live.

LITERARY STYLE.

Magazine Writers Who Assume Literary Superiority Are Themselves Open to Criticism.

Western Journalist.

To a newspaper man who is accustomed to sinking individuality in his writing, the leading articles in magazines and reviews seem the climax of egotism. The reporter knows nothing of the first person singular, while many of the writers whose opinions are thought valuable on account of the prominent position they hold can use the little, assertive pronoun "I" in a manner truly alarming.

This is particularly noticeable in the April number of the North American Review.

Bishop Whipple, of Minnesota, begins his article with the following sentence, which makes one paragraph: "I have been requested to write for the North American Review my Indian experience."

Robert Lowry, ex-Governor of Mississippi, begins his contribution with: "I am invited to discuss the needs of the South as I learned them during my occupancy of the executive office for eight years in Mississippi."

Here is an example of modesty that would never be equaled in a newspaper office. No reporter would ever begin an article with the pronoun "I," much less following with the gratuitous information that he had been invited to write, consequently his opinions were worthy of your careful consideration, and were not intended to be laughed at.

The Rev. Lyman Abbott, D. D., begins his exceptionally able and interesting open letter to Robert G. Ingersoll with: "When the editor of the North American Review requested me to reply to your two articles * * * my first inclination was to decline."

Francis Galton, F. R. S., does not bring his personality into his paper until the second sentence, but after its first introduction it shows no hesitancy in appearing frequently.

Madam Adam uses the following complacent and self-laudatory apology for her article: "After Count Paul Vasili, it is a great boldness on my part to speak of the society of Paris. I beg my readers to believe that it would not have entered my head to write on this subject had I not received the pressing invitation of the editor of the North American Review."

The Western Journalist does not print these opening extracts for the purpose of criticising, but simply to let its friends in the profession note more readily that charges against the "style" of newspaper writers have no real foundation in fact. There is a quiet laugh in the thought of a writer using the first person singular five times in the opening paragraph of an article.

Making a Steel Pen.

New York World.

"The ordinary steel pen of commerce, which a steady writer will wear out in a couple of hours of hard work," said a manufacturer, "goes through a dozen distinct processes before the crude metal is converted into the polished pen-point. The flat sheet of white metal, about two by four inches, is 'punched' into the rough outlines of five pens. These are then 'worked' out into complete outlines. The hole in the middle of every pen-point, sometimes an eighth of an inch long and a sixteenth wide, is then cut or 'pierced.' The pen is then 'annealed' and 'raised,' the latter process giving the relief effects on its convex surface. It is then 'hardened,' 'tempered,' 'scoured,' 'ground,' 'slit' at the paint and 'varnished' before it is the pen-point of commerce.

CLARA BELLE'S GOSSIP.

How a Young Girl Secured Permission to Paint—Fair Robbers in Charity's Name.

Special to the Indianapolis Journal.

NEW YORK, May 10.—Society is suffering from amateur elocutionists and vocalists, whose artistic sins are covered by charity, for they read and sing for benevolent causes ostensibly. These performers imitate professional actresses, not only in manner, but also in "making up" their faces with paints. These examples have led to a suddenly free use of artificial colors on girls' faces, and that is the whim of the movement. It has been observed that a famous beauty, whose raven hair, almond eyes and marble-white throat have combined to reduce a small army of men to the state of helpless adoration, owes a large share of the pink lustre of her cheeks to such appliances as are put up so cleverly by the French in neat boxes. One old crab of a man made the remark, in the hearing of her father, that if she would stop putting rouge on her face she would not be so stared at by strangers who saw her on the street. The father accordingly put on his glasses the next time he saw his daughter, and examined her carefully.

"What is that red stuff on your cheeks, my child?" he asked, wetting his finger and rubbing it over the girl's face.

"That's nothing, papa," she replied; "only a little pink powder—that is all."

"Go and take it off at once," exclaimed the old gentleman.

"But, papa," interposed the girl.

"Not a word," shouted her father. Go, and do as I bid you."

The humiliated beauty went to her room, and washed her face thoroughly. Then, after shedding a few tears, she went back and knelt down before her father, imploring his forgiveness for being so foolish as to paint her cheeks. The old man put on his glasses once more, and scrutinized his daughter's face.

"You've taken it off, haven't you?" he said.

"Yes," replied his daughter.

"Well," said he, after a moment's pause, "for heaven's sake, go put it on again."

The famous belle now rouges her cheeks with the sanchion of her doting parent.

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Some of those magnificent-looking actresses who charitably devote their valuable services to selling flowers at theatrical benefits are too shrewd for any sort of use. One of the prettiest that ever tied ten cents' worth of violets into a five-dollar boutonniere was disposing of her wares with splendid success the other day, when it was observed by a few of the more watchful loungers that she was a party in an ingenious little trick that successfully pulled the wool over the eyes of the good-natured public. By the side of her table stood a young man who has a mental acquaintance with a wonderfully large number of men about town. As a gentleman would stroll near to this young man he would speak out of the corner of his mouth to the pretty actress behind the flower table, and she would then call out:

"Oh, Mr. Smith, can't I sell you a bouttonniere?"

The passer-by, on hearing himself called by name, would stop short, and, looking at the radiant face of the actress, would approach her and enter into a delightful conversation over the beauty and fragrance of flowers in general and of the cluster on her breast in particular. Very often the precious cluster would be detached and sold at a double price. As the purchaser went away he wondered how that stunning woman ever learned his name. He did not imagine for a moment that the young man at her side had imparted it to her.

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One incident will show how charmingly presumptuous these fair flower actresses can sometimes be. A young fellow had bought a bunch of roses from a girl whose blonde loveliness can be found reflected in many hundred cigarette packages, and had gone away, leaving his umbrella leaning against the pretty one's table. A full hour passed before he remembered his loss. Then he strolled over to where she still beamed upon her patrons, and asked her if she had seen his umbrella.

"Why, was that lovely umbrella yours?" asked she, contributing upon the young man one of her irresistible smiles.

She was informed that it was, and, if she had it, it would be acceptable to its owner.

"Oh, isn't that funny," laughed the actress. "I found that umbrella, and thought it would be a lovely idea to raffle it. I put it up and it brought $17."

The young man was naturally much chagrined, but he pocketed his wrath, when, to appease him, the fascinating little robber pinned a bunch of pansies in his coat with her own fair fingers.

SAFE-OPENING HUMORS.

Some Incidents Showing How Great Troubles Arise from Little Causes.

Boston Courier.

"There are many amusing incidents connected with our business," said a safe manufacturer one day. "It is to be expected that in the ordinary course of events circumstances will arise when a safe will have to be opened by an expert. Locks, like any other piece of mechanism, are not infallible. The best of them are liable to fail, at times, through some slight defect in manufacturing, same as the mainspring of the most valuable watch may give out unexpectedly.

"Not long ago a firm wanted a man to fix their safe. It was open, but they could not shut the door far enough to throw the bolts. The man went to the place, and, after a brief examination, saw a penny resting on one of the bottom flanges. Taking this off, the door shut and locked all right. It is forgotten how much it cost the firm to have the man go to their place and pick up that little coin, but it was enough to prevent its being repeated, no doubt. A similar case happened recently. We were sent for at about the close of business hours to see what was the trouble with one of our safes. The bolts would not throw far enough to turn the lock. The result was the finding of a cloth button from a lady's dress in the lower bolt-hole. This removed, all was right. As the victim was a staid bachelor, and supposed to occupy his office alone, he begged that it should be kept quiet.

"Some years ago we had delivered a new set of vault doors for a bank about two hundred miles away. Just before they were ready to occupy their new quarters, we had a telegram to send a man at once. The bolts of the outer door would not throw far enough to lock it. Our man went, and this is what he found: The bank officers had fitted in a board for the tread of the vestibule, but had omitted to bore holes in it to allow for the throw of the bolts. An auger and ten minutes' labor made everything all right, but made that piece of board a rather extravagant luxury.

"Epicurean-like, we have reserved the best for the last. For fear this may reach the eyes of the hero of the incident, I will substitute for his correct address that of Calais, Me. It was not a thousand miles from there. The letter read to come at once and open a safe, as there were important documents wanted for immediate use. With his kit of tools, our man took the next train and arrived on the following evening. It proved to be an old-fashioned safe, with a large key lock. 'There,' said the man, is the safe. The lock has been working harder and harder for weeks, until now I am locked out. I am in a hurry to have it opened. Never mind the damage, if you will only break into it in short order.' Our expert took the key and tried it, but it refused to work. He then took a small wire and picked out half a thimbleful of dirt and lint from the key, tried it again, and a better working lock was never seen. 'How much is your bill?' As this involved a trip, to and from Calais, of about six hundred miles, and time and expense in proportion, he replied $40. Taking a roll of bills from his pocket he said: 'That is satisfactory, on conditions. Does any one in the place know your business here?' The reply was 'No one.' 'All right, then; get out by the next train and keep mum; for I would gladly pay $100 rather thave any of my friends know that I was fool enough to go to Boston for a man to pick the dirt out of my key.'"